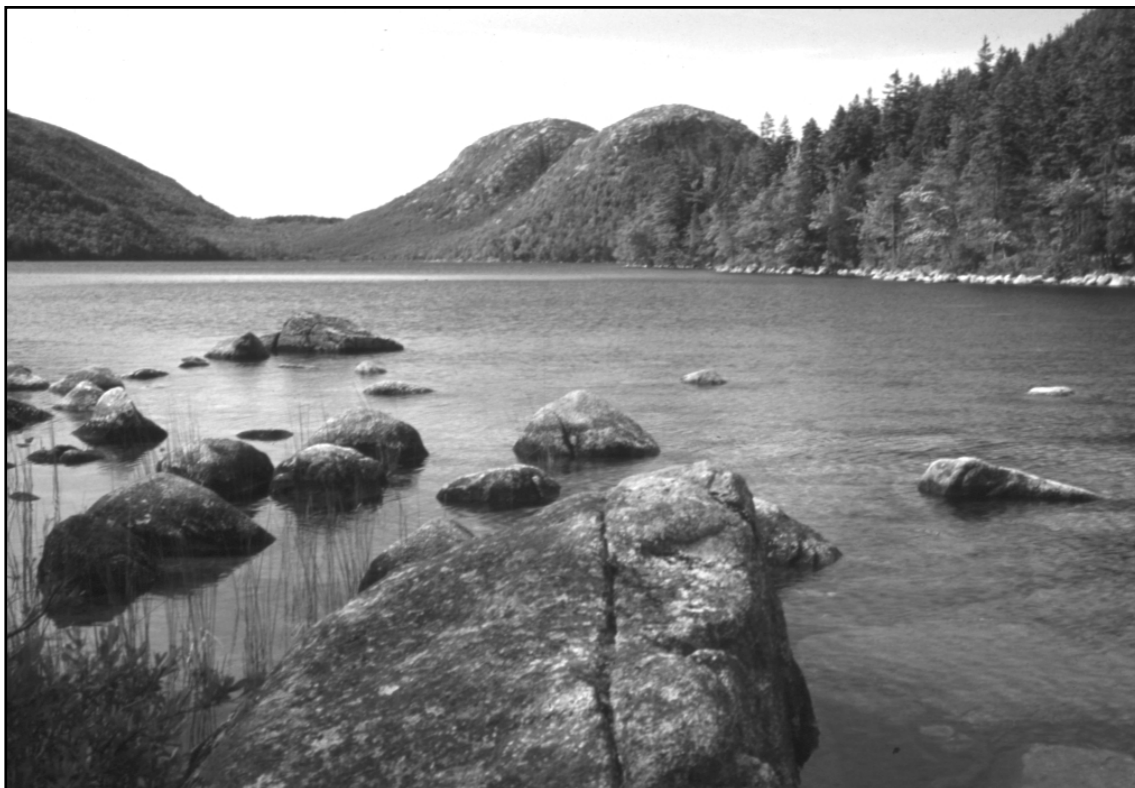


## SECTION ONE – BEGINNING YOUR VISIT

### **Chapter One – Introduction to Acadia and the Guide's Guide**

Acadia National Park – A Park Like No Other  
About this Guide





## Acadia National Park – A Park Like No Other

“It is a true park area in the highest sense, totally different from any other that we have.”

“It is rich in historic association, in scientific interest, and in landscape beauty.”

“There is no other place along the Atlantic coast where so wide a range of geologic facts are shown or where such valuable material is offered for research.”

“It will give a healthy playground to multitudes of hard-working men and women.”

“With its adjacent inlets and headlands, it stands out as offering the greatest natural diversity.”

—*excerpts from letters to President Woodrow Wilson in support of the park's creation*

The above lines, written in the early 1900s in support of the creation of a national park on Mount Desert Island along the coast of Maine, are as applicable today as when they were first penned. The foresight of stewardship-minded individuals at the turn of the 19th century created this first national park east of the Mississippi in 1916. Private citizens, through their generous donations of land, gave this gift to the American people. Granite mountain tops, sparkling lakes, forested valleys, meadows, marshes, and rocky coastline weave together to create a national park like none other. Acadia's landscape holds human history as well, from American Indians and European explorers to a seafaring population and conservationists.

Acadia's resources are not found in oil or lumber, but in undisturbed natural systems for study, exceptional scenery for individual inspiration, protected habitat for plants and animals, and defining stories of people and the land. The National Park Service at Acadia is charged by federal law to protect and conserve Acadia's outstanding scenic and natural resources and cultural identity for present and future generations. Through this mission, preservation, education, scientific research, and recreation opportunities abound.

**Acadia, like other national parks, offers opportunities to fulfill emotional and spiritual needs for renewal and to invoke attitudes of reverence and stewardship.** Because of the deep affection held for Acadia, private citizens of both a century ago and today took the actions necessary to preserve these beautiful landscapes. As a national park, Acadia has continued the tradition of providing spiritual respite and encouraging responsible stewardship. Acadia's easy accessibility for all ages and all levels of ability make it possible for everyone to observe and be renewed by nature.

**The flora and fauna of Acadia National Park and surrounding waters comprise a rich mix of species significant in their biodiversity.**

Botanically, Acadia lies in a transition zone between the northern coniferous forests and the temperate deciduous woods. The co-mingling of species from two distinct regions creates unusual plant associations. Rare and endangered plant species find refuge here. The variety of vegetation supports a diversity of wildlife as well. Critical habitat is provided for all animals, especially for protected species and nesting seabirds on outlying islands.

**The cultural resources of Acadia National Park document human activities that span 5,000 years.** Acadia's human history begins with centuries of seasonal use by native peoples followed by a period of European contact, exploration, and settlement. Decades of commercial use by lumbermen, shipbuilders, and fishermen overlapped and even fostered increased pressure for conservation and the evolution of tourism. Today, over three million visitors seek Acadia's gifts, either by trail, boat, bicycle, vehicle, or through quiet contemplation.

**Acadia National Park provides many opportunities to increase our understanding of natural systems and human impact on them.**

A living laboratory since the 19th century, Acadia continues to offer significant possibilities for education, continued ecosystem monitoring, and research that generates valuable data. The park's professional biologists who monitor air and water quality, develop plant and animal inventories, study individual species, and conduct other investigations, continue to add to Acadia's foundation of historic scientific reports.

**The natural landforms of Acadia National Park illustrate the dynamics of many geologic processes.** The geologic record at Acadia is displayed as a living textbook. The park's granite mountains are surrounded by sedimentary and metamorphic rocks, covering a time span of half a billion years. The awesome power of glaciers is evident in the valleys and cliff sides, while the on-going assault by the sea reworks the island's edge even today. Significant geographic resources include Somes Sound, the only fjord along the eastern seaboard and Sand Beach, a natural pocket beach composed primarily of shell fragments.

The dramatic beauty and associated qualities of this mountainous island made it deserving of national recognition. Acadia's attributes are on a similar scale to all holdings of the National Park System. Within the national parks are some of the world's greatest ecosystems as well as our country's treasured stories.

## THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The National Park System includes beautiful and significant natural areas such as seashores, lakeshores, mountains, canyons, caves, deserts, coral reefs, and geologic wonders. Also preserved are important pieces of our nation's history such as battlefields, war sites, American Indian sites, and the homes of Presidents, inventors, civil rights leaders, authors, and others of national prominence. Some national park titles are familiar to most people while others are more obscure. A site can be called a national park, historic site, historical park, monument, parkway, lakeshore, seashore or any of 11 other titles. The National Park Service now preserves for the people of the United States over 380 sites representing some of the most cherished natural and cultural areas of our nation.

Yellowstone is often highlighted as the first national park, created for a "public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people" in 1872. Other parks such as Sequoia, Mount Rainier, Crater Lake, and Glacier were created between the 1890s and early 1900s.

By 1916, the United States Interior Department oversaw about a dozen national parks and around 20 national monuments (including Sieur de Monts National Monument, later to become Acadia National Park). The National Park Service itself was created by an act, signed by Woodrow Wilson on August 25, 1916. It directed the service to "...*conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.*"

This mission continues into the 21st century. The dual directive to preserve the land, history, and wildlife while making them available for public enjoyment proves increasingly difficult. Yet, the National Park Service is directed to accomplish both with units such as Acadia. Every individual park's policies are derived from this act. Acadia's specific purpose reads:

1. To protect and conserve the land and water resources, scenery, the natural and historic objects, and the biota within the park boundary.
2. To promote and regulate the use of the park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people in such manner and by such means as will leave the park resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.
3. To protect and preserve the scenic, ecological, historic, archeological, and cultural resources of the Acadian archipelago and to limit development of the islands to preserve their natural qualities and traditional resource-based land uses.

Is this a pretty big job? Absolutely! Merely setting property aside does not guarantee that it is protected. Outside influences from water pollution, air pollution, and loss of surrounding habitat degrade the “protected” area inside the park boundary. Through the dedicated work of park employees, whether they are educators, law enforcement rangers, maintenance workers, biologists, or administrators, the value of national parks is instilled in park visitors. This understanding and appreciation will naturally influence the appropriate stewardship of our nation’s parks. Acadia’s staff hopes you will share in these efforts and be a partner for protection. After all, Acadia National Park belongs to all of us, and to our future.

*\*Letter excerpts from statements by Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane; former President Theodore Roosevelt; Acadia founder George B. Dorr; David White of the U.S. Geological Survey; and M.L. Fernald of Harvard University.*



## About this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide group leaders, educators, bus drivers, tour operators, employees working with park visitors in the service or recreation industry, and concession supervisors accurate information about Acadia National Park. The primary objective is that all employees or tour guides who work with the visiting public will be trained sufficiently about the mission of Acadia National Park. This understanding in turn will further park education efforts and result in the on-going protection of Acadia's resources.

Because of the variety in guide user needs, some information is repeated in different sections. For example, site specific information that can be used as a touring script may have the same information as a fact sheet on the subject, although presented differently. Whereas one person may need the information in a script format, another may only want to use a fact sheet for their employees to better understand a subject. Repetition of material is meant to assure inclusion of all groups using the *Guide's Guide*.

### USING THE GUIDE

There are five sections plus an appendix.

#### **Section One** *Introductory Materials*

This section is divided into three chapters—an introduction to Acadia and the *Guide's Guide*; getting started; plus important park information.

#### **Section Two** *Site Specific Information*

This section is divided into 10 chapters about different areas in the park. Each chapter provides the following:

##### Before You Go - What to Know - Logistics for Specific Park Sites

*Location:* How to find the site

*Area Highlights:* Lists the specific areas of interest at the site

*Time Allotment:* Gives approximate times spent at the site and for different activities

*Parking:* General parking information for the site

*Accessibility:* Offers information for what is and is not accessible at each site

*Facilities:* Whether restrooms, picnic areas, restaurants or shops are available

*Safety:* Specific safety issues that should be watched for and safety regulations that should be followed

*Trailheads and Trail Connections:* Names of trails found around the site

At-A-Glance conveys what's important about a specific park site.

*Significance:* This short paragraph conveys what is unique or of ecological or historical importance of the site. Offers a brief description of the site as well.

*Fast Facts:* This section is a short list of the important facts for that site. These facts are later expanded upon in the background information/narrative. *Fast Facts* are a quick review or a guideline to important information.

*Protect Your Park - How You Can Help:* Highlights important considerations and *Leave No Trace* guidelines specific to the site as well as methods to assure minimal impact on the ecology of the park.

*Helpful Information:* Information found in fact sheets, field guides, and appendix that provide more information or can be used as handouts for your group, depending on their needs.

#### Background Information/Narrative

*Background Information/Narrative:* This section provides subject information for the site in a narrative form. It is intended to be used either by a group leader who wants to use it as an outline or to be used directly as a touring script.

*Touring Information:* Each site's narrative indicates if it is appropriate for large groups, children, or for large groups to get off the bus. Mileage and parking information is provided. Any specific driving instructions are indicated in italics.

**Section Three** *Fact Sheets* are divided into six chapters designed to give more in-depth information about various topics than the narratives in Section two. They may also be used as informational handouts when training staff. Information is provided for the following topic areas:

- *Wildlife (Mammals, Birds, Amphibians, Reptiles, Fish)*
- *Plants*
- *Land Formations*
- *Tidepools*
- *Resource Management*
- *Cultural History*

**Section Four** *Recreation Sheets* are designed to give group leaders a general idea for planning recreational activities. The information provided for most of these chapters should be accompanied by maps and or more detailed guides (see appendix for suggested resources). The following topic areas are included:

- *Hiking*
- *Biking*
- *Boat Excursions*
- *Camping*
- *Fishing*
- *Rock Climbing*

**Section Five** *Working with Youth* offers specific information for groups that work primarily with children.

**Appendix**

Schoodic Peninsula, Isle au Haut, weather information, frequently asked questions, and supporting information about the park's natural and cultural history.